

## REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration of the above-identified application in light of the amendments and remarks described herein. Claims 15-25 were pending in this application. Claims 15, 19, 23, and 25 have been amended, Claim 24 has been canceled, and new Claims 26-32 have been added. Therefore, Claims 15-23 and 25-32 are currently pending in this application.

Claims 15-23 have been rejected.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, Claims 19 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, and Claims 15-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, applicants request reconsideration and allowance of all claims.

### Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 19 and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action states that the limitation "inserting said second loop through said first opening without rotating said central axis of said first opening more than 45 degrees from said static condition with respect to said central axis of said second opening" is indefinite because it is unclear how the applicants' invention meets the claim limitation when one of the loops has to rotate around the handle more than 45 degrees before being able to enter the other loop. Applicants have made appropriate corrections to Claims 19 and 24 and, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Office Action Summary states that Claims 15-23 stand rejected, applicants assume that all of the previously pending claims -- Claims 15-25 -- stand rejected because no claims have been indicated in the Office Action as allowed or allowable.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 15-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,447,037, issued to Crouch (hereinafter "Crouch"). Applicants respectfully disagree.

To establish a case of obviousness, the prior references must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

Claims 15, 19, and 23 all recite methods of using a coupling device for providing redundant attachment between an arm of a user and a device having a closed handle. Claim 15, as currently amended, generally recites a method including obtaining a coupling device having first and second ends. The first end includes a first loop defining a first opening, wherein the first loop is oriented in a substantially open position. The second end includes a second loop defining a second, larger opening, wherein a central axis of the first opening is non-parallel with a central axis of the second opening when the coupling device is in an unfolded, static condition. The method further includes routing either the first loop or the second loop through the closed handle, moving a distal tip of the second loop toward the first opening without substantially twisting the coupling device about a longitudinal axis of the coupling device, inserting the second loop through the first opening without substantially twisting the coupling device about the longitudinal axis of the coupling device, and pulling the second loop through the first opening to tighten the coupling device to the closed handled device without substantially twisting the coupling device about the longitudinal axis of the coupling device.

Claim 19 and 23, as currently amended, generally recite methods including obtaining a coupling device having first and second ends. The first end includes a first loop defining a first opening and the second end includes a second loop defining a second opening, wherein a central axis of the first opening is non-parallel with a central axis of the second opening when the coupling device is in an unfolded, static state. The methods further include routing either the

first loop or the second loop through the closed handle, moving a distal tip of the second loop toward the first opening without twisting the coupling device more than 45 degrees from a longitudinal axis of the coupling device, inserting the second loop through the first opening without twisting the coupling device more than 45 degrees from the longitudinal axis of the coupling device, and pulling the second loop through the first opening to tighten the coupling device to the closed handled device without twisting the coupling device more than 45 degrees from the longitudinal axis of the coupling device.

Crouch purportedly describes a coupling device and method of using the coupling device for gathering and carrying a plurality of bags with handles. *See* Crouch, at Col. 4, lines 1-12. The device 10 comprises a strap 12 having an elongated body 14, the opposite ends 16 and 18 of which are configured as closed loop portions 20, each closed loop portion 20 defining an opening 22. *See* Crouch, at Col. 3, lines 22-27. Referring to FIGURE 1 of Crouch, the central axis of the first opening 16 is parallel with the central axis of the second opening 18 when the device 10 is in an unfolded, static condition. Further, the openings are of substantially similar size. *See* Crouch, at Col. 3, lines 42-52. Referring to FIGURE 3 of Crouch, either the second loop 18 or the first loop 16 must be twisted about a longitudinal axis of the device to insert the second loop 18 through the first opening 16.

Applicants respectfully submit that Crouch fails to teach or suggest each and every element of amended Claims 15, 19, and 23 and the claims depending therefrom. In that regard, Crouch fails to teach or suggest "wherein a central axis of said first opening is non-parallel with a central axis of said second opening when said coupling device is in an unfolded, static condition," as recited in Claims 15, 19, and 23. In contrast, Crouch teaches first and closed loop portions 20 having central axes that are parallel to one another when the device is in an unfolded, static condition, as best seen in FIGURE 1 of Crouch.

In addition, Crouch fails to teach or suggest "moving a distal tip of said second loop toward said first opening without substantially twisting said coupling device about a longitudinal axis of said coupling device; inserting said second loop through said first opening without substantially twisting said coupling device about the longitudinal axis of said coupling device; and pulling said second loop through said first opening to tighten said coupling device to said closed handled device without substantially twisting said coupling device about the longitudinal axis of said coupling device," as recited in Claim 15. In contrast, Crouch teaches substantial twisting of the device about a longitudinal axis of the device during one or more of the steps of moving a distal tip of the second loop toward the first opening, inserting the second loop through the first opening, and pulling the second loop through the first opening, as best seen in FIGURES 3 and 4 of Crouch.

Moreover, Crouch fails to teach or suggest "moving a distal tip of said second loop toward said first opening without twisting said coupling device more than 45 degrees from a longitudinal axis of said coupling device; inserting said second loop through said first opening without twisting said coupling device more than 45 degrees from the longitudinal axis of said coupling device; and pulling said second loop through said first opening to tighten said coupling device to said closed handled device without twisting said coupling device more than 45 degrees from the longitudinal axis of said coupling device," as recited in Claims 19 and 23. As discussed above, Crouch teaches substantial twisting of the device about a longitudinal axis of the device (i.e., more than 45 degrees about a longitudinal axis of the device) during one or more of the method steps of moving a distal tip of the second loop toward the first opening, inserting the second loop through the first opening, and pulling the second loop through the first opening, as best seen in FIGURES 3 and 4 of Crouch.

Further, Crouch fails to teach or suggest "wherein said first loop is oriented in a substantially open position...when said coupling device is in an unfolded, static condition," as recited in Claim 15. In contrast, Crouch teaches first and second loops oriented in substantially closed positions when the device is in an unfolded, static condition, as best seen in FIGURE 1 of Crouch.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that Claims 15, 19, and 23 and all claims depending therefrom are not obvious over Crouch. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections.

New Claims 26-32

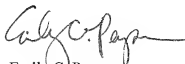
Applicants respectfully submit that new Claims 26-32 are in condition for allowance and do not present any new subject matter.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully submit the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned with any remaining questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

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